

# TO THE CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREES



— Book 1 —

The Texas Lodge System of Candidate Information  
The Grand Lodge of Texas, A.F. & A. M.

*The material contained herein is taken, in part, from the Lodge System of Masonic Education, printed in 1959 and adapted from material published by the Grand Lodge of New Mexico, along with the 1980 revision of the Texas Lodge System of Candidate Information. However, we are also grateful to many Masonic Grand Lodges, many writers, and many other sources, for the information contained in these pages. To the Grand jurisdictions of Georgia, Iowa, New York, Scotland, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, and to our own Texas predecessors of 1935, go our deep thanks for their contributions.*

**Revised March 2019 – Committee on Masonic Education and Service**

**PART I**

**INFORMATION TO BE GIVEN ORALLY TO THE CANDIDATE FOR THE  
DEGREES OF FREEMASONRY**

*(The following lecture can either be read to the candidate or played for him using the digital audio file available from the Grand Lodge of Texas.)*



## **PART I - ORAL/AUDIO LECTURE**

Congratulations! You have been elected to receive the Degrees of Freemasonry. A committee has investigated your character and reputation, and the members of this Lodge have consented to your being admitted to the mysteries of Freemasonry.

Before you are initiated, we believe that a short discussion of Masonry will make our ceremonies more impressive, our symbolism more instructive and stimulating, and our obligations and lectures better understood and remembered; with the hope that if you present yourself at our door with some knowledge of the purposes of our gentle Fraternity, you will be better able to appreciate its great beauty.

The doors through which you are about to pass lead to a different way of life. You are about to enter upon a new and important undertaking-you are about to become a Mason!

This discussion is designed to prepare you and your family for what lies ahead. We sincerely hope that you will share its contents with your family, let them read these words, let them know and understand the steps you are about to take, for they will surely share in the results and the benefits of your membership.

## WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?

Freemasonry is a way of life. It is a society of friends and Brothers banded together into a Fraternity - a Fraternity open to all good men who desire to become better men. It is not a secret society. Surely, like all fraternities, we do have some secret ritualistic work. Nevertheless, we have no secret aims or objectives and our members do not hide the fact that they are members. To the contrary, we proudly wear membership pins, and our buildings are often landmarks in their communities. Masonry is not a Church, nor is a religion - it certainly not intended as a substitute for religion. However, Masonry does require that a man believe in God and in the immortality of the soul. All meetings open and close with prayer, and the Book of the Sacred Law, the Holy Bible, is open on the altar during all meetings, for at the very foundation of Masonry is the precept of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Contrary to the opinion held by many, Masonry is not a charitable institution, as such, nor does it insure its members against the problems of old age, provides no specific sick benefits, issues no policies on the lives of its members, and pays no death benefits of any kind. It should be understood, however, that one of our fundamental principles is the practice of relief, and a Mason necessarily ministers to the "widows and the fatherless in their affliction". However, the matter of individual relief is confined to those cases where, in spite of all the efforts of a Brother or of his family to maintain economic independence, such relief becomes necessary. Your part in this procedure is far more likely to be that of a contributor than a beneficiary, except in that larger sense, in which every man benefits from the fact that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Masonry is not a political party, nor is it an ally of any political party. Its members are free to form their own political affiliations, but it does inculcate a commonsense conception of good citizenship. Moral obligations bind its members to respect and uphold established authority and order.

Freemasonry has been defined in many different ways. Here is one used by our English Brethren: "Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols." Let us break this down into perhaps simpler terms:

By a "system", we mean something more than an ordinary society. The history of Freemasonry goes beyond definite written records into the realm of tradition and speculation.

We feel that the term "Universal Brotherhood" is a reasonable term, since we know that throughout the free world there are Masonic Lodges practicing the same ceremonies, revering the same traditions, interpreting the same symbols, recognizing each other's members, cooperating with one another, willing to accept as members good men and true who desire to promote the Fraternity's laudable purposes.

*It is a system of morality:* It teaches moral lessons and encourages its members to follow ethical practices.

*It is veiled in allegory:* This simply means that Masonry often suggests its lessons and philosophy by the use of veiled allusions and figurative forms of speech.

*It is illustrated with symbols:* A symbol is a visible sign of an idea. As the dove is a symbol of peace, and the flag is a symbol of patriotism, so are the teachings and ideas of Masonry conveyed to us by its symbols. If, throughout our ceremonies, you will remember that the Lodge room is a symbol of the world, and that the candidate is a symbol of a man living in that world and searching for education and truth, you will better understand the reason for our use of symbols.

Masonry has also been described as "a speculative art founded on an operative science". Again, let us try to explain this rather complicated statement:

The history of Masonry shows that prior to the early part of the 18th Century, it was limited to Lodges or craft guilds of operative Masons, the builders of buildings. At that time, the secrets of the Fraternity centered on the knowledge and practices of the stonemasons' craft. However, those guilds often admitted as associate or honorary members others who were not stonemasons. These honorary, or speculative members, as they became to be known, often outnumbered the working masons, and in time, some of the Lodges became entirely speculative, thus evolving into the Lodges, as we know them today.

These speculative members took the comparatively simple ritualistic ceremonies of the Operative Lodges, which had been handed down from time immemorial, and added to them from the Bible and from other sacred writings and legends; so that today, we have a ritual based primarily on the working stone masonry of the men who built the cathedrals, BUT overlain and interwoven with legends, ceremonies and symbols derived from many other sources. You will understand this better when you have been taught the symbolic lessons which are suggested by the practical uses of the tools used by the ancient builders.

Let us look at Freemasonry in still another way: It can be said that our great Fraternity is a Philosophy of Life, bound together and presented in a series of degrees, carried to the individual member, and made to function through a system of Lodges. Each Lodge is composed of a group of men desirous of learning about and practicing Freemasonry, bound together by their Masonic obligations and working under or controlled by Masonic law. Each Lodge, after meeting certain requirements, is granted a charter by its Grand Lodge by which it is authorized to meet, act and work as a Masonic body. It is governed by a set of officers, elected annually by the membership. The principal officer of a Lodge is the Worshipful Master, who rules and governs under Masonic law without question, answerable only to the Grand Lodge and to the Grand Master. He is assisted by a Senior Warden and a Junior Warden, who, together with the Treasurer and Secretary, comprise the five major officers. In addition, there are other necessary officers usually appointed by the Worshipful Master.



Each individual Lodge is ordinarily limited to a definite area or community. Nearly every community or town of any consequence in the United States has a Masonic Lodge, with the larger cities having many Lodges.

Each Lodge is part of and governed by a Grand Lodge. A Grand Lodge is confined to a certain geographical area. The Grand Lodge of Texas, for example, is supreme unto itself, and owes no allegiance to any higher authority, other than to certain fixed Masonic usages or Landmarks brought to us from past ages by the passage of time. Each Grand Lodge passes its own laws, adopts its own ritual, sets its own standards, and governs all Lodges and individual Freemasons in its jurisdiction. You might feel that this would lead to confusion and misunderstanding. However, you should never forget that our principles are fixed, and that Freemasonry is basically the same from one Grand Jurisdiction to the next. Though the rituals and regulations may be slightly different in each jurisdiction, every member believes in and practices the fundamental principles of our Order.

There is no way to change root system Masonry to suit the tastes or prejudices of the individual; it is the individual who must change himself to conform to Masonry. To become a Mason, therefore, you must stand ready in all sincerity to give wholehearted agreement to our teachings and principles, and obedience to our laws and regulations. You may rest assured that you will never be asked to agree to anything that will be contrary to your obligations to your Church, your family, or your Country.

The lessons taught by Freemasonry are so clear and simple that they can be understood by anyone. At the same time, they are so deep and involved that no one individual can hope to know all their meanings and implications. It is this seeming paradox, or contradiction, which explains why so many eminent scholars have studied deeply and written learned books on Masonry; and why there are so many members who are not scholars, but who love Masonic study and reading. Always remember that it will be your privilege, and we hope, your pleasure, to go behind the words of the ritual, and to delve into the hidden mysteries of the Fraternity. This is what makes Masonry so fascinating.

Finally, in its utmost simplicity, the purpose of Freemasonry is to help the individual man to improve himself. We repeat: we do not propose to take the bad and make him good; rather, our aim is to take the good and make him better. The intent of Freemasonry is TO BUILD MEN. Your proposal to become a Freemason is a matter for very serious consideration. We hope you have not entered into it hastily, inadvisably, or by persuasion. We want you and we welcome you as one soon to become a member of our Fraternity, but we want you to understand, that when with seriousness of purpose, you cross the threshold of a Masonic Lodge, it should become for you a sacred place. In a very vital sense, the Lodge will become your home, where you should be content to love and serve your Brethren, honor your God, and learn the many lessons, which Masonry seeks to teach.

Before you pass through our open door, you should be careful to meet the following personal requirements:

- (1) You should be clean in body. Let this be symbolic of a deeper process of purifying your mind and conscience, and of the integrity of your intentions.

(2) You must be clear in mind. Come with your mental faculties free from distracting thoughts that would tend to divert you from the instructions you will receive. Seek to set aside all prejudice and antagonism within you, and be free to accept and understand the solemn truths you are about to receive.

(3) You must be pure in heart. Put away evil thoughts of every kind. If you have done anyone a wrong, seek honestly to correct it.

(4) You must be prayerful in spirit. Whether or not it is your daily habit to pray to your God, pray on the eve of your initiation for His blessings upon what you are about to do, for wisdom that will help you to understand, and for strength of purpose that will make you steadfast.

(5) You must be confident of your intentions. Be certain that it is still your sincere desire to proceed upon the quest for light and knowledge for which we are trying now to prepare you. It is vital that you know, BEFORE you cross our threshold, that there is no rightful place in Masonry for the half-hearted or the unstable.

As we conclude this portion of our discussion, we are sure that you now thoroughly understand that Freemasonry is entirely serious in character. Contrary to what you may have heard or may hear, there is no horse-play or frivolity in our Degrees; their primary purpose is to teach, to convey to you a knowledge of the principles of the great institution with which you are about to unite. With this in mind, you should prepare yourself to approach the degrees with an open and relaxed mind, determined to absorb as much as is possible, without fear of ridicule or indignity.

***Welcome to the fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons!***

## **PART II - TO THE CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREES OF FREEMASONRY:**

In the preceding pages, you have been given considerable information, which should be helpful to you as you prepare yourself for, and receive, the Degree of Entered Apprentice. You will be wise to go back and re-read those pages again prior to your Degree.

In Part II of this booklet, we have assembled some material for your reading pleasure. Read and study it at your leisure. Encourage your family to read it. This material includes:

1. **WHERE DID FREEMASONRY COME FROM?** A thumbnail history of our great Order, including its beginnings in Texas.
2. **WHAT DOES FREEMASONRY MEAN TO YOU?** An expanded discussion of what Freemasonry should and should not mean to you.
3. **HOW DOES FREEMASONRY WORK?** A short general presentation on the internal operations of the Lodge, of the various bodies associated with the Order, and of the importance of symbolism to the total Masonic learning process.
4. **DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF LODGE MEMBERSHIP.** A brief summary of the duties, responsibilities, and rights and privileges of Masonic membership.

## WHERE DID MASONRY COME FROM?

Where did Masonry come from? Largely, much that is said and written about Freemasonry necessarily represents the personal opinion or thinking of an individual or a group of individuals. In this fact lies one of the great strengths of our Fraternity. As you progress and learn about Freemasonry, you will find that while the truths and principles of the Order are positive and fixed in character, much of their interpretation is left to you, the individual. It is this factor, which affords you the opportunity for a lifetime of research and study.

One of the most interesting and romantic parts of Freemasonry is its history. You may have heard or read that Freemasonry is one of the world's oldest organizations. Where did it come from? How did it originate? Here again, conjecture and interpretation play their part. We can but give you the generally accepted views of many Masonic scholars. In general, the history may be divided into two distinct eras or parts. The first refers to the era, which came before recorded or written history. The second refers to the era that runs back from the present day approximately 800 years and covers that period of which there is a definite record.

There are those who believe that Freemasonry originated with the very beginning of civilization, indeed with the start of intelligent thinking man. However, there is no absolute basis for such a belief. We do know that as time and experience proved certain truths, these truths were taken and carried to the thinking people of the various tribes. We do know, also, that in several of the ancient civilizations there existed certain mystic societies; that these mystic societies had a Lodge form, with Lodge officers, all similar in character and all teaching moral living. Thus, it might rightfully be supposed that the ideals and teachings of our Order have come to us from the learning and wisdom of the dim past.

While we refer to ourselves as "Freemasons", the accepted term for hundreds of years was simply "Masons". Defined, Mason means "Builder". Starting some 800 years ago, and lasting nearly 400 years, was the era during which were built in Western Europe the hundreds of great Gothic cathedrals. Many of these immense structures still stand as a memorial of the past and as an inspiration to the people of today.

To us, it is almost incomprehensible that these magnificent cathedrals were built completely by hand, with only the simplest of tools. The credit goes to the Builders or Masons of that era. It was their ingenuity, imagination, resourcefulness, and industry, which produced these monuments.

To accomplish what they did, these Masons banded themselves together in workers' Guilds. Each of the Guilds formed a Lodge, with regular Lodge officers and each with three levels of membership. The first, or lowest form of members, were apprentices or bearers of burdens. The second form was craftsmen or fellows, the skilled workers on the Temples. The third and highest form was the masters, constituting those who were the overseers and superintendents on the building. In addition, certain states of proficiency were required before a man could pass from one degree to the next. Furthermore, they all taught and required of their membership certain attributes of moral conduct. Most Masonic scholars agree that it was in these Guild Lodges that actually gave birth to modern Masonic Lodges and to present day Freemasonry.

We refer to these Guild Masons as "Operative" Masons, because they actually operated as and performed as working masons in the building of the cathedrals. However, during the sixteenth century there began, the decline of the Gothic building and with it a decline in the strength of the Guild Lodges. For two hundred years, these Lodges struggled and fought for their very existence. During this struggle, some of the Lodges, to preserve themselves, began taking in other members, that is, men of high moral character, but not necessarily followers of the builders' trade. These non - operative members were referred to as "Accepted" Masons and later as "Speculative" Masons. Eventually many of the Guild Lodges came to be known as "Speculative Lodges". This

was particularly true in the British Isles, where a considerable number of men in all lifestyles were admitted to membership in the Lodges of Freemasons.

The start of the eighteenth century saw the birth of modern architecture and with it the complete fade-out of Gothic building. It appeared that Freemasonry was doomed when, in the early 1700s, four Lodges in London met together and probably for no other reason than to strengthen and preserve them, decided to form a Grand Lodge. In 1723, they adopted a constitution to govern themselves. Their success led to the establishment of other Grand Lodges in similar fashion. In 1725, some of the Lodges in Ireland formed a Grand Lodge for that island, and a similar body was instituted in Scotland in 1736. Moreover, the original Grand Lodge of England did not remain without rivals in its own country, and at one time in the eighteenth century there existed in England three Grand Lodges in addition to the one first organized in London. Two of these died out without influencing the history of Masonry in general, but the third had a great part in the spread and popularizing of Masonry throughout the world. It styled itself the "Ancient" Grand Lodge, while the original body was known as the "Modern" Grand Lodge. The two for a period of time were to some degree rivals, but they finally united in 1813 into the present Grand Lodge of England. Thus, from one of these two Grand bodies in England, or from that of Ireland or Scotland, are descended directly or otherwise all other Grand Lodges in the world today.

It was inevitable that Freemasonry should follow the colonists to America and play a most important part in the establishment of the thirteen colonies. Freemasonry was formally recognized for the first time in America with the appointment by the Grand Lodge of England of a Provincial Grand Master in Massachusetts in 1733. American Masons worked under foreign jurisdiction until 1781, when the first Grand Lodge was established in the State of New York.

One of the most enthralling and romantic portions of all Masonic history lies in the story of the part played by Freemasons in the formation of our country. We will never know just how great a part Freemasonry actually did play; but without exaggeration,

we can say that Freemasonry and Masonic thinking contributed most significantly to the founding of this great republic.

A significant number of the signers of the Declaration of Independence as well as the drafters of the Constitution were members of our Fraternity, many of them most active in the affairs of their Lodges. George Washington was a staunch Freemason, and it is said that before the close of the Revolution he placed no one but Freemasons in posts of importance. He was the first of fifteen Masonic Presidents and the only one to serve as Worshipful Master of a Lodge and President at the same time. The others after Washington are James Monroe, Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Johnson, Garfield, McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Harding, Franklin Roosevelt, Truman, Johnson, and Ford, of whom Jackson and Truman served also as Grand Masters.

In the struggle for Independence such well-known patriots as Paul Revere, Joseph Warren, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, John Hancock, as well as Lafayette, Von Steuben, and many others, were members of the Craft. No doubt, Freemasonry was responsible for and shaped much of their thinking and opinions. Volumes have been written about the participation of Freemasons in the Revolution and the founding of America. Time will not permit us to say more except that it was an episode in history of which we can all be most proud.

Ever since that period Masonry has grown and flourished, following closely the growth and expansion of the United States. Freemasonry came to Texas as part of that expansion.

There were many Masons among the early settlers in Texas, with membership in Lodges all over the world. The first attempt to organize a Lodge in Texas was destined to failure. On February 11, 1828, Stephen Fuller Austin, the beloved "Father of Texas," an active Mason and a member of St. Louis Lodge No. 3 in the territory of Missouri under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, met with six other Masons, Hosea H. League, Ira Ingram, Eli Mitchell, Joseph M. White, G. B. Hall, and Thomas M.



Duke, and signed an application for a Masonic Charter addressed to the Yorkino - Grand Lodge of Mexico. The Charter, if ever granted, was lost, probably due to the existing uncertain transportation and travel conditions. In this same year, however, Masonry was outlawed in Texas by the Mexican government, and Masonic activity went underground for several years.

The next attempt to organize Masonry in Texas met with success. In March 1835, six men met in a little grove of wild peach or laurel back of the town of Brazoria and concluded to petition the Grand Lodge of Louisiana for a dispensation to form and open a Lodge of Masons. The officers named in the petition were Dr. Anson Jones, Master; Asa Brigham, Senior Warden; and J. P. Caldwell, Junior Warden. They were joined in signing the petition by John A. Wharton, James A. E. Phelps, and Alexander Russell. Later the signature of W. D. C. Hall was added. The petition requested that the Lodge be named "Holland Lodge" in honor of the then Grand Master of Louisiana, J. H. Holland. The petition was forwarded to New Orleans by messenger, was granted, and on December 27, 1835, the first meeting of Holland Lodge No. 36, U. D. was opened at Brazoria in the second story of the old Court House. By this time open hostilities had broken out between the settlers and Mexico. The last meeting of the Lodge was held in February 1836, and it is worthy of note that the immortal Fannin acted as Senior Deacon at this meeting. Brazoria was abandoned in March and General Urrea of the Mexican army destroyed the records, jewels, and books of the Lodge.

Brother John M. Allen, an illustrious Texan, was in New Orleans recruiting soldiers for the Texas army. The Grand Secretary of Louisiana handed him the Charter for Holland Lodge No. 36 for delivery to Brother Anson Jones. The delivery was accomplished on the prairie between Groce's plantation and San Jacinto, and Dr. Jones placed it in his saddlebags and carried it through the battle of San Jacinto. In October 1837, the Lodge was re-opened in Houston.

There were then in existence two other Lodges in Texas chartered by the Grand Lodge of Louisiana-Milam No. 40 at Nacogdoches and McFarland No. 41 at San Augustine. At the invitation of Holland Lodge No. 36, delegates of the three Lodges met at Houston in the Senate Chamber of the Capitol of the Republic at 3:00 o'clock p.m. on December 20, 1837. Brother Sam Houston presided and Brother Anson Jones acted as Secretary. At this meeting, the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas was organized, with Brother Anson Jones as the first Grand Master.

From these three Lodges, Holland No. 1, Milam No. 2, and McFarland No. 3, membership has grown and declined to the point where we now stand at approximately 800 Lodges and 70,000 members. As early as 1848, the Grand Lodge of the Republic provided for an Education and Charity Fund of ten per cent of its revenues, and appointed a superintendent of education. Many early schools were established by Masonic Lodges, and actually met in Masonic Lodge buildings. We must never forget that it is now generally recognized that our great Texas free public-school system was first conceived and established by the Masons and Masonic Lodges of Texas.



Nor must we forget that our precious Masonic heritage was established by our Masonic forebears under great difficulties and hardships. By their heroism and sacrifice, they threw off a semi barbarous tyranny, and established here a government of freedom and Brotherhood. Like the tolling of a giant bell comes the names of Stephen F. Austin, Sam Houston, Anson Jones, Allen, Fannin, Milam, Travis, Rusk and many other Masons far too numerous to mention here. Our debt to them can never be paid.

## WHAT DOES FREEMASONRY MEAN TO YOU?

As a candidate for the Mysteries of Freemasonry, a logical question you might ask would be, "What can Masonry mean to me?" or perhaps "What does it mean to me?" Freemasonry probably means something somewhat a little different to every individual member. However, there are certain aspects that we can discuss briefly; and for the sake of clarity, we would like to approach this portion of the discussion from both a positive and a negative angle: First, "What can Freemasonry mean to you," and secondly, "What Freemasonry does not mean." Some of these points were briefly mentioned in the oral discussion. Hopefully, the following material will provide additional details.

One of the fundamentals of Freemasonry is the practice of Brotherly Love. You no doubt have a good idea of what we mean when we speak of this fact. We would like to point out that true Brotherly Love is more than the congenial bond of good will and understanding that exists between close friends. To practice true Brotherly Love means to practice true and genuine Tolerance, Charity, Truth, and Justice, toward all human beings.

Nothing could ever be said that would stress more the importance of Brotherly Love than to recall the words of Jesus of Nazareth when shortly before His death, He gave to the world His last great Commandment: "And I give unto you that ye love one another." Surely, He meant this to include all the people in this world and He meant for all of us to love one another. The concept of Love and Tolerance for all men does not mean approval or sanction of all that all men say or do. Love and Tolerance represent a two-way road of mutual respect.

We need reflect but a moment on the situation of the people in the world today, with the existing bitter strife and constant struggle for the dominance of special interests and ideologies, to realize more than ever before that we need a complete understanding among all people. Because of technical advancements, there no longer exists between people the natural barriers of distance, ocean or mountains; and because of the newly

developed means of destruction, civilization today faces annihilation. Humanity's preservation lies in a complete acceptance and practice of true Brotherly Love by all the people in the world.

We have singled out this principle of Freemasonry for special comment because we feel that it is one of the most important. *If Freemasonry stands for anything, it stands for the practice of true Brotherly Love in all of its various aspects.* If all of the people in the world could be made to understand and practice genuine Brotherly Love, then and not before, could we attain the desired goal of universal peace. Toward that end, Freemasonry is the greatest single human force in the world.

Perhaps one of the greatest innate qualities of intelligent man is his desire for self-improvement, both physical and mental. Without question, this inbred trait has led man to his present high level of mental and physical attainment. This trait has been the ever-present guiding torch in man's quest for the better life. Unfortunately, man's moral development has not always kept pace with his physical and mental development, and today it is often felt that the greatest opportunity to aid human life lies in the development of man's spiritual and moral character.

There also exists within the Lodge environment the opportunity to work and fellowship with a diverse, yet like-minded, group of men who collectively possess a vast array of life skills and abilities from which to draw. Here, you will be able to obtain practical knowledge that will serve you not only as a member of the Lodge, but also in your usual vocation. Additionally, you will be able to reciprocate by sharing your unique talents with them.

Freemasonry offers you this opportunity. As stated previously, if you are so inclined, Freemasonry affords the opportunity to you and to every member for a lifetime of study. There is no other organization that offers you such a privilege. In Freemasonry, you find all the time-proven, fundamental doctrines for moral and right living, gathered together, and offered in many different presentations for your personal study and use, as well as an environment in which to learn and develop practical life skills.

A question you are going to have to answer for yourself is, "What am I going to do about it?" Are you going to go through the degrees, receive the work, decide that Freemasonry is a fine institution and then do nothing about the teachings presented to you? If so, you are wasting our time, as well as your time and money. Alternatively, are you going to recognize the opportunity, which is yours; that is, to take the various doctrines and truths presented to you, study them, analyze them, contemplate on their meanings and then apply them to your own life? Perhaps the greatest opportunity of all is the application of Masonic teaching to every phase of your daily existence. It is felt that probably the greatest failure of Freemasonry lies in the fact that many of us are inclined to adopt a double standard of conduct whereby we apply our Freemasonry to part of our lives, but feel that it does not apply to the other phases. Such thinking is erroneous. A true Freemason will apply the teachings of our Order to every phase of his existence. We sincerely hope that you will see fit to follow such a practice. This great opportunity for self-improvement is one that you should grasp to such an extent that the principles of Freemasonry would eventually spread through every fiber of your life, until you will say that, Freemasonry is one of the greatest personal experiences through which you have ever passed.

We should like now to take a few moments to discuss some of the things that Freemasonry does not mean. First, Freemasonry is not a social institution in any sense. Of course, the various meetings or communications afford the opportunity for social contacts and discourse, and many close friendships have started in the Lodge; but our primary purpose has always been, and will always remain, the propagation and teaching of our doctrines and ideals. There will be many meetings of various kinds, but always our purpose remains to further the cause of our Fraternity.

Contrary to the belief of some of our members, Freemasonry is not a tool to increase our personal business or to further our personal ambitions or special interests. Because you are a member of the Fraternity does not necessarily mean that the other members will patronize you in preference to your competitor; nor does it mean that you can expect any special favors or privileges from them. Your private life will remain on the same basis on which it now exists. Any benefit in the material sense, which may come to you, will come because of the reputation you establish rather than because of your being a Freemason.

Lastly, we repeat what was told you earlier, *Freemasonry is not a religion*, and all we ever ask of you is your assent to a belief in God and in the immortality of the human soul. Other than that your personal beliefs are your own and no concern of the Order. Freemasonry is open to men of *all* religious faiths that concur in and acknowledge a Supreme Being. You may say that religion and Freemasonry both subscribe to the same doctrines. This is true; but all formal religious bodies subscribe to certain creeds and are theological in character, while Freemasonry has no creed and the application of our teachings is entirely in a practical sense rather than spiritual. We feel that Freemasonry should supplement or implement your religious faith rather than replace it. In fact, the two should go hand in hand.

Feeling as we do, you can readily see why religious discussions of a *sectarian* nature are *strictly prohibited* in our Lodges and Lodge meetings. Religious discussions related to *dogma* inevitably lead to argument, which in turn leads on to disagreement and

dissension. We work continuously for peace and harmony among our Brethren, so nothing that would tend to disrupt such harmony can be tolerated.

In like manner and for the same reasons, all political discussions, *partisan* in content, are *prohibited*. A member's political beliefs, as long as they do not conflict with Masonic doctrine, are his own. No member, running for public office, has any right to expect the support of any other member because of his Lodge affiliations. Partisan politics are not for Freemasonry or any of its Lodges.

We desire to impress upon your mind in the most lasting and substantial manner possible that promoting oneself through Masonic activity or accomplishments, in any business advertisement or political campaign, is *strictly* and *positively prohibited* and would subject a Mason to severe discipline.<sup>4</sup>

To sum up: As a Mason you will never introduce into the Craft any controversial sectarian question; you will pay no heed to those from without who attack the Fraternity; you will adhere to that religion in which all good men agree; and in your life as a member of the state you will ever be loyal to the demands of good citizenship.



*"Freemasonry teaches not merely temperance, fortitude, prudence, justice, brotherly love, relief, and truth, but liberty, equality, and fraternity, and it denounces ignorance, superstition, bigotry, lust tyranny, and despotism."* – Theodore Roosevelt

---

<sup>4</sup> Article 510 does allow the listing of membership as a Freemason, in the same manner as you would list the schools attended, or membership in a church or other civic organization.

## HOW DOES MASONRY WORK?

We have spoken a great deal about your study and assimilation of the teachings brought to you in the degrees. There is no better way for you to learn the Art of Masonry than by attending your Lodge meetings *regularly*. As you see the degrees conferred repeatedly, you will find more and more Freemasonry being unfolded to you. If so inclined, you might even go a step further and participate in the conferring of the degrees. In fact, you cannot find a better teacher than that of working in the degrees themselves. We mention this because while attendance at our communications is not compulsory, we do urge you to make every effort to attend. You will find it most worthwhile.

As part of the Work, you will be required to demonstrate your knowledge of each of the three Degrees. This will be done through a series of questions and answers, taught you by a member or members designated by the Worshipful Master. It will then be necessary for you to stand a satisfactory examination in open Lodge on this memory work after each Degree.

Do not be frightened by this requirement or doubt your capacity to learn, every member before you has had to do the very same thing. One of the purposes of learning these proficiencies is to enable you to visit other Lodges. You cannot attend another Lodge unless there is a Brother present who has sat in Lodge with you and therefore can vouch for you, or unless you stand a satisfactory examination on your Masonic knowledge before a committee. This examination is based on the memory work. After receiving the Third Degree, feeling you have reached the end, you might be inclined to neglect learning the Third Degree proficiency. This would be regrettable, first, because it would impair your ability to visit other Lodges and to converse intelligently with your Brethren. Secondly, you are required by law to learn it.

It might be well at this time to say a word about Freemasonry concerning your family. The degrees you are about to receive are secret and naturally should not be discussed or



talked about to anyone except a true Brother Mason. *However, what Freemasonry is and stands for, its aims, its purposes, are not secret, can, and should be discussed.* However, we believe it most essential that you retrain from such discussions until you become a Master Mason. By then, with diligent study and instruction, you will be qualified to discuss such matters intelligently. In the meantime, however, you are encouraged to let your family *read* any written material given to you by the Lodge.

You probably have heard mention of various other bodies or organizations in connection with Freemasonry. That you may be properly informed, we feel a brief explanation is in order. You are joining what is commonly known as the "Blue Lodge", which is the basis or foundation of all Freemasonry. It is also called the "Symbolic Lodge." It confers three Degrees: Entered Apprentice Mason, Fellowcraft Mason, and Master Mason. From the "Blue Lodge", Symbolic Masonry or Ancient Craft Masonry emanates *all of the other pendant or affiliated groups or organizations.* And, although each of these bodies have their own leaders, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Texas, the "Blue Lodge", is the final Masonic authority over every Mason in Texas.

Do not be misled by hearing some of these other Masonic organizations referred to as consisting of "higher degrees". There is no higher degree than that of Master Mason. Always bear in mind that the "Blue Lodge" is the *basic, the primary,* organization and embodies the framework of all Freemasonry.

Stemming from the "Blue Lodge" are two sets of degrees, commonly referred to as Rites. One of these is the York Rite, consisting of Royal Arch, Cryptic and Knight Templar Masonry. The other is the Scottish Rite, which confers from the Fourth to the Thirty-second Degree. Each of these Rites has oftentimes been alluded to as a college course in Masonry, as each expounds and elaborates on the basic doctrines of the Order and each is a recognized Masonic Body. There are many other organizations, which are recognized by us. All of them predicate their membership on some form of Masonic membership, and all of them subscribe to some worthwhile purpose. Some of the most commonly known of these are the Shrine, Grotto, Eastern Star, DeMolay, Rainbow, etc.

We most earnestly recommend that you acquire a thorough knowledge of our basic doctrines before becoming involved with any of the other groups.

Earlier, you were informed that Masonry would be presented to you symbolically. To close this discussion, we feel that an explanation of Symbolism would be of benefit to you; and because of his eminence in present-day Freemasonry, we would like to give you the interesting thoughts written some years ago by Brother H. L. Haywood in his book, "The Great Teachings of Freemasonry".

Masonry is a great teaching organization, but it differs from all other teaching institutions by the method it employs; indeed, it differs from them so radically that its method is unique. Where they use books, set statements, speeches, lectures or schoolroom methods, it uses symbolism. Consult your own experience: in school you studied text books; in the church you hear sermons, Scripture Readings, and recite creeds; in your political party you adopt platforms; almost everywhere you encounter such methods; but in Masonry you are not taught out of a book; you receive no course of lectures; there is no official statement or creed; everything is conveyed to you by symbols. Without these symbols, Masonry is deprived of its voice and can say nothing, because it has no means to say it; can do nothing, because it is deprived of its only Working Tool. The soul of it, the mind of it, the heart of it, and the message of it, are all in its symbols. For this reason, there is nothing else in Masonry, and there can be nothing else so important for you to understand as its symbolism.

The very fact that elsewhere you do not receive your ideas in symbolical form may lead you to consider Masonry in general and the Ritual in particular as a queer, strange, unprecedented kind of thing. Its peculiarity may be your greatest obstacle in understanding it. Your mind is not in the habit of thinking by means of symbols, and it is difficult to form a new habit. In addition, since you are accustomed to receive all authoritative utterances in the form of words or plain commands, you may be tempted to feel that our symbols are not quite as binding

on you and not to be taken quite as seriously as a statement in plain words. All such considerations prove how important is the present subject.

What is a symbol? First, a symbol is itself a thing, which is used in some literal way. A carpenter's try-square, rule, plumb, or hammer, a letter out of the alphabet, a geometrician's circle, square, angle or straight line, a coffin, a setting maul, an hourglass, a beehive, a book, a hand extended; each of these is a thing like any other and has its own direct, immediate uses. In the second place, the principle, or use of any one of these things, is found in operation in many different forms and under many other conditions. A carpenter's rule, for example, is an instance of the principle of measurement. This principle may operate in countless forms: music may be measured by beats, a liquid can be measured in a cup, and time can be measured by a clock and so on. The moment any such thing as a rule is not used for its first, immediate and usual purpose but is made to stand for a general purpose, or use, or idea, it becomes a symbol. When the carpenter uses his rule to measure a board, the rule is not a symbol; but when the same rule is hung on the wall to represent all kinds of measurements, the very idea or principle of measurement itself, and then it becomes a symbol. The rule as a symbol is not less real than the rule as a tool, but more so; is not less definite in its measurement, but more definite; expresses not a smaller truth, but a larger one; does not make less demands on the mind, but more. It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that symbols are vague, uncertain, and indefinite as compared with things in their familiar use; the exact opposite is the truth.

When, therefore, you encounter a Masonic Symbol, such as the Square, the Compass, the letter G, etc., you are not to suppose that it is a hazy, vague thing that may mean anything or nothing and that you can be indifferent to it; on the contrary, its meaning is perfectly definite, and that meaning is quite as binding on you as a Mason as if it had been expressed in a written statement.

The old notion that Masonry hides, or disguises, or conceals its plain teachings behind symbols is the exact opposite of the truth. Symbols do not conceal the meaning of Freemasonry; they reveal it. Symbols do not obscure the teachings; they make them perfectly clear. If our Craft were to write down officially all its teachings in the form of words, those teachings would not be one bit clearer, more definite, or more understandable than they are now. Men differ about the meaning of symbols, you may say; yes, they do, but men also differ about the meaning of words. It is hard, you may argue, to understand an allegory or a ritual; it is also hard to understand a book, a creed, or a lecture.

Perhaps you will say to yourself, "This is doubtless all true; but after all, it does not tell me how to go about studying these symbols for myself; it is very well for Masonry to use symbols, but why doesn't it go on to explain them afterwards?"

The answer to that question leads us to one of the central secrets in the whole art of Masonry, and that secret is so vital to you that we may be pardoned if we urge you to use all your power to grasp it firmly with every faculty at your command: *One of the greatest purposes of Masonry is to set a man to the task of understanding these symbols for himself.*

We talk much about the art of Masonry. What do we mean by that art? We talk much about the Masonic life. What comprises that life? One of the principal things in that art or life is just this task of understanding these symbols. You have a whole lifetime in which to do it, but that is not too much time. You must think for yourself; that will make your mind grow. You must overcome many difficulties; that will sharpen your intelligence. You must conduct your own search; that will develop your understanding. You must translate these symbols into practice; that will strengthen your character. You must exercise patience, use imagination, have insight. All these will cause your soul to grow and your spirit to develop. In the very process of understanding the symbols of Masonry, you will develop into Masonic manhood.

Others will assist you. You can read books; you can use your own powers of observation. Watch, reflect, think, and follow the clues; note how one symbol helps to explain the other. See how each one is the part of the larger system and helps to explain another. Do all this, and in good time the whole, great, profound, inexhaustible, incalculably-valuable wisdom of Masonry will dawn on you like the sunrise and open out for you like the day.



## **DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF LODGE MEMBERSHIP**

In petitioning for the Three Degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry, your presumed desire was to become a member of the order that you might enjoy the fraternal fellowship of the Brethren and that you might be of service to your fellow men. It will be helpful to you to have some conception in advance of what Lodge membership implies. This subject may as yet be only partially explained, although there is much that you can and should understand at the start of your journey.

You will become a member by receiving the three degrees. You will become entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership by proving your proficiency in each degree. By taking the obligations of the degrees, you enter into a contractual relationship with the Lodge, wherein you bind yourself to perform certain duties, and the Lodge binds itself to protect you in certain rights and privileges.

One of your first duties will be loyalty to the Fraternity and to your superior officers, and obedience to the laws. This is a fundamental requirement.

It will be your duty to pay regularly and promptly such dues as your Lodge may establish. No option is given; to do such is a necessary condition of membership. In addition, it will be your duty, as your conscience shall guide, and your means permit, to do your share in maintaining the charities of the Lodge and to stand ready to lend a helping hand to a Brother Mason in distress.

If you are present at a communication of the Lodge when a ballot is taken on a petition for initiation, advancement, affiliation, or reinstatement, you must vote. This is only another way of saying that the responsibility for deciding Masonic membership rests on every member. To cast a vote is not merely a right or privilege to be exercised by choice, but a duty.

It will be your duty to attend the communications of your Lodge, to join in its deliberations and decisions and to assist in discharging its responsibilities. You are not required nor even expected to attend if by doing, it works an unnecessary hardship on yourself or your family, but otherwise your attendance is expected.

If the Master, acting according to the provisions of the Grand Lodge Laws, issues a summons to you to attend a communication of the Lodge for some special purpose, or to discharge some duty required of you as a Mason, it will be your duty to obey the summons, unless the circumstances render obedience impossible.

Such duties are inherent to membership in a Lodge; others will be made clear to you as you progress in Masonry. In many fundamental respects, a Lodge differs from any other organization; membership is not a mere gesture of honor, nor an idle privilege, with duties and obligations to be laid down or taken up at pleasure. A member should not stand outside in idleness until he has opportunity to secure something from it for his own selfish advantage, nor evade his responsibilities by shifting his duties to more willing shoulders. The Mystic Tie by which he is bound to his fellows has in it a strand of steel.

Certain rights and privileges accompany these duties and are equally maintained and made secure by the Fraternity.

As a member of a Lodge, you will be eligible to any office in it, except that no member can become Worshipful Master, unless he has previously served as Worshipful Master of a *regular* Lodge in another Grand Jurisdiction, or as Worshipful Master or Warden of a Lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction, and met the qualifications for office as detailed in the statutes of Grand Lodge Law.

You will have the right to join in our public processions, a privilege carefully guarded and protected by our laws, since to join in such is to identify oneself with the Fraternity.

As a Master Mason in good standing, you will be entitled to additional rights and privileges which, in due time, will be explained to you.

As a Mason, you will be entitled to Masonic burial, a privilege to be valued over and above its public recognition of your standing.

In all communications of the Lodge, you will have a voice in its discussions and a vote on questions decided by the Lodge. Neither in Lodge nor in Grand Lodge is there taxation without representation, nor is any Masonic officer permitted to exercise arbitrary or unreasonable authority.

The Lodge and Grand Lodge give many services and extend many opportunities for entertainment, good fellowship, and educational advantages; as a Mason, you will have the privileges of enjoying these equally with all others of your fellow members.

When among strangers you will possess certain modes of recognition by which to prove yourself to another Mason and to exact similar proof from him, thereby enabling you to establish fraternal relations with men who otherwise "must have remained at a perpetual distance". To know that wherever you may go you will find Brothers ready to extend the hand of fellowship, men whom you have never met but who already stand bound to you by the Mystic Tie, is one of the greatest of all privileges of membership.

These duties, rights, and privileges of Masonic membership are not exhaustive. We have just touched the fringe of a great theme, but it is our hope that, with such light as has been given you, you will go forward with a livelier, keener understanding of what Masonry can mean to you, and, also of what you may mean to it.



# Texas Lodge System of Candidate Information (T.L.S.C.I.)

## To the Candidate for the Degrees

### General Evaluation Sheet

To: The Candidate for the Degrees,

Congratulations upon being elected to receive the degrees of Freemasonry. Your opinion is important to me; therefore, I request that you take a few moments and fill out the short evaluation below.

Please mail or email to:

Chairman  
Committee on Masonic Education and Service  
PO Box 446  
Waco, Texas 76703  
[chairman.mes.glotx@gmail.com](mailto:chairman.mes.glotx@gmail.com)

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
1) Readability	1	2	3	4	5
2) Informational content	1	2	3	4	5
3) Worth the time spent	1	2	3	4	5

	Too Little	Just Right	Too Much
1) Amount of Information	1	2	3
2) Time used to complete	1	2	3

Strong points were: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Weak points were: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Topics not useful: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Topics wanted: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Spelling, Typos, Grammar, etc. (Please reference page and paragraph): \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time!